

PfP Thrive Academy

Employer Engagement

Document History: to be reviewed on at least an annual basis or sooner if there are significant changes required

Approval should be the Academy Director or a relevant member of the Academy Governing Board.

Version	Date	Action	Amended By	Reviewed By	Approved by and Date
V1.0	September 2024	New Policy Creation	Rebecca Edwards		

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Introduction

The PfP Thrive Academy is a training provider focusing on the needs of the housing sector from an employer, learner and community perspective. We believe that successful employer engagement is essential for our training services in particular for our apprenticeship provisions.

The purpose of this policy is to set out our commitment to engage and work with employers to design, develop and enhance our curriculum offering opportunities for employers to make an active contribution towards the delivery of our apprenticeship.

The engagement allows us to respond effectively to the needs of our employers by providing a workforce with the opportunities for up skilling and professional development.

Our commitment and working partnerships with employers are set out within this policy to outline the key mechanisms of delivering well developed, employer focused apprenticeships.

Scope

This policy covers all our training and education services provisions including our apprenticeship programmes.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Academy has overall responsibility for this policy however the Business Development Manager will oversee the day to day management of the policy. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or as and when required.

The Business Development Manager is responsible for ensuring that a copy of this policy is available to the Academy Centre Manager and Tutor team and that the policy and procedures are reviewed annually. They are offered the necessary training in order to successfully use this policy.

The Business Development Manager has the responsibility to ensure this policy is fully explained and understood by our employers.

The Academy Centre Manager is responsible for ensuring the adherence of this policy by the Academy Tutor team and supporting them when they encounter issues with learners and/or employers.

The Business Development Manager who reports directly to the Academy Director holds overall responsibility for managing relationships with employers. The Business Development Manager and the Academy Centre Manager will lead on any complaints, contract review meetings, employer feedback and implement new processes as and when necessary.

The Academy Co-ordinator, together with the Places for People Marketing and IT teams, will be responsible for ensuring all course information is updated on the PfP Thrive Academy website. Together the team will share news, case studies, updates via social media, email, face to face meeting, phone calls and any methods deemed appropriate.

The Academy Centre Manager and the Tutor team are responsible for involving employers throughout the whole learner journey. This includes programme development, delivery, encouraging participation in feedback at different stages and progress reviews.

The tutors will act as a day to day contact for employers and be available to answer any general enquiries, questions or offer any support. Where the tutor is unable to help the employer or where there is a complaint this will be escalated to the Academy Centre Manager or Academy Director as appropriate.

All employees are required to act in accordance with this policy, to enable effective employer engagement.

Key Strategic Priorities

- To enhance employer networking, collaboration and collective action by sharing knowledge and good practice, research and closer working relationship with all.
- To secure mutuality of benefit for employers, learners and including structured support for staff development and network opportunities.
- To apply appropriate, quality assured systems and processes to maximise opportunities for engagement and to evaluate impact which will be used to make informed decision on improvement of the training and education services including apprenticeship programme.
- To share practice, promote up skilling and staff development culture to support the employers and their staff.
- To communicate this strategy to employers, local business networks, partnership organisations and stakeholders.

Implementing the Strategy

- Growth in our employer facing team to ensure active engagement to promote or services
- Increase opportunities for our representatives to engage in strategy groups, workshop, consultations, forums, partnerships and sector skills groups on a local and regional basis, as appropriate, to inform on patterns of demand.
- Effectively analyse and disseminate market intelligence and ensure action through a variety of programme delivery and offer in addressing skills needs.
- Conduct research to ensure that activities such as employer engagement events, consultancy services and knowledge transfer partnerships are driven by the needs of employers.
- Source funding streams to support and promote employer engagement.
- Promote and re-iterate the benefits to existing and new employer partners of actively engaging in our apprenticeship programme.
- To improve the financial and reputational sustainability of our organisation through developing new income streams, increased alignment to government funded opportunities and positive outcomes for our learners.
- Implement the systematic use of employer feedback and student satisfaction surveys at different stages to inform and benchmark our engagement and support activities.
- Promotion of gov.uk schemes, national apprenticeship week and find an apprentice training service – including regular up-dates to the provider portal so information is up-to-date for employers.
- Actively encourage staff to engage in industrial updating through necessary continuous professional development activities and review staff skills to match the needs of employers and industry requirements.
- Ensure employer engagement informs operational planning and expected outcomes.
- Increase satisfaction rates in Employer survey.
- Target Levy paying employers to educate and deliver quality apprenticeships to them.

- Support employers to offer Apprenticeship Standards and actively engage in 20% 'off the job' training.
- Support employers to use the DAS and find an apprentice, including posting of vacancies for employers, shifting of candidates and assistance with interviews where required.
- Support employers through the apprenticeship process by regular quality assurance checks, formal and informal communication including formal quarterly reviews.
- Partnership working to offer our employers a stronger and customized portfolio of qualifications.

Processes Approach

Our Academy team promotes the benefits of all our training education services and apprenticeship programme through various means including face to face meeting, email communication, marketing activities, use of multimedia, word of mouth and referral and other ways deemed necessary.

Other engagement activities include attending networking events, training events, seminars, webinars, employer's forum and others.

In relation to apprenticeship frameworks and standards the assessment plans are issued and discussed with the employer to find a suitable qualification to fit their needs. If we do not offer the appropriate qualification or an apprenticeship is not a suitable or fundable option then information, advice and guidance will be issued to the employer for alternate providers, including using the find an apprenticeship training site.

Our Academy team and wider Places for People Group offer end to end recruitment working with the employer on all elements of recruitment and design of the apprenticeship programme, including agreeing off the job training opportunities, completing a skills scan or knowledge, skills and behaviours assessment, accreditation of prior learning of mandatory training and requirements for an apprentice.

A commitment statement is agreed with the apprentice and employer at this stage to outline each parties' responsibilities in relation to the apprenticeship, including how to record the off the job training, and attendance days required at the PfP Thrive Academy (or Hub) site. Throughout the apprenticeship delivery, the employer has constant contact with the Academy team to quality check the apprentice and the apprenticeship being delivered with any concerns to the appropriate personnel to rectify swiftly.

Employer feedback is also sought in necessary internal and other stakeholders (ESFA, OFSTED) survey, and in reviews, which is collated and used to improve quality improvements and training.

Our Academy team regularly visits the employer and completes quarterly progress reviews with the employer and apprentice where development opportunities are sought and off the job training is agreed.

Employer complaints are handled by the Academy Centre Manager who will discuss the concerns with the employer (nominee and/or key personnel) and find a suitable solution to all parties, any best practice or standardisation/training then required will be implemented as deemed necessary.

Employer questions and/or queries are dealt with by the Academy team in most instances, however any technical issue may be referred to the Academy Centre Manager. Questions raised via our website or social media are also effectively dealt with.

Monitoring of the above process and strategy are completed at the employer engagement team meetings and within our Self-Assessment Report, SAR and Quality Improvement Plan, QIPs used to reflect any changes.

Any complaints/queries are dealt with immediately in strict confidentiality, and continual contact is maintained throughout the whole learner journey with employers.

Initial employer engagement

The Business Development Manager will meet face to face with employer to identify their needs and how we can support them in building apprenticeship provision within their business.

They will carry out the necessary health and safety checks and relevant insurance and will ensure accurate information about apprenticeship including wage of apprentices, duration, 20% off the job training requirements, engagement responsibilities, assessment processes and other contractual requirements are provided and fully understood by the employer.

The Business Development Manager will ensure the employer or its nominee signs necessary contractual agreement in due time.

A training needs analysis is carried out to ensure relevant information is captured to design and deliver the right apprenticeship programme including selection of optional modules to customise the provision for each employer. The training need analysis will be revised annually by engaging the employers.

The Business Development Manager will maintain regular communication (written, phone calls, multimedia, face to face) with the employer's nominee and those who are acting as mentors and coaches.

The Academy Centre Manager will offer necessary training to the employers' personnel who will be mentoring and coaching the apprentices.

Summary of main activities but not restricted to:

- Initial engagement meeting;
- Presentation of curriculum and delivery
- Providing marketing materials for employer to utilise and including Find Apprenticeship Training (<https://findapprenticeshiptraining.apprenticeships.education.gov.uk/Apprenticeship/Search>), Recruit an Apprentice (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/apprenticeship-vacancies>) and others
- Employer training needs analysis with an agreed review date.
- Identification of key people (nominee, coaches, mentors) in the organisation who work alongside our staff.
- Contract agreements and design.
- Reviews

Training offer and locations

We will be offering the following standards to employers and apprentices:

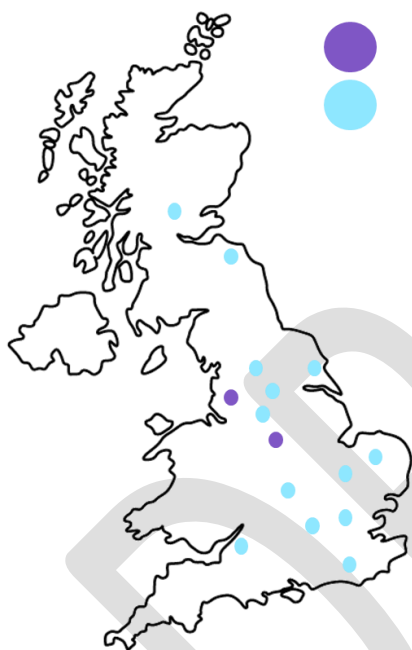
Trade based apprenticeships	Skills based apprenticeships
Property Maintenance Operative Level 2	Customer Services Practitioner Level 2
Carpentry/Joinery (site route) Level 2	Team Leader/Supervisor Level 3
Installation and maintenance Electrician Level 3	Operations Manager Level 5
Plumbing and domestic heating technician	

All trade based apprenticeships will be delivered at the PfP Thrive Academy, a bespoke facility which provides outstanding facilities for the apprentices at our Derby site:

PfP Thrive Academy, 1 Centro Place, Pride Park, Derby, Derbyshire, DE24 8RF.

The skills based apprenticeships can either be delivered at the PfP Thrive Academy or at one of our National Thrive Hub sites as shown in the map below. Alternatively, depending on numbers and requirements we may be able to offer these apprenticeships at a location of the employer's choosing including their own premises. We will also be able to support these apprenticeships through virtual technology where appropriate.

We also offer a wide range of short technical courses and organisational development solutions.



Academy site: Derby and Preston
Hub sites:

Programme design

It is our aim that all of our education and training programmes including our apprenticeship programme delivered for employers are tailored to their needs, along with individual needs of the apprentice. Our approach is to design an apprenticeship programme alongside the employers and its key personnel to establish the knowledge, skills, competence and behaviours needed to develop their workforce.

Our bespoke design and delivery also take into account:

- Personalised curriculum and module development
- Selection of optional units
- Accreditation of prior learning
- Mandatory training offered by employer
- 20% off the job delivery
- Accessibility

- Additional and personalised learning support
- Personalised progress reports
- Coaches and mentors' responsibilities and duties
- Reviews and monitoring approaches
- Timetable, scheme of work and lesson plan can adjusted according to employers' needs.

Outlined below are a number of strategies we adopt to manage employer relationships and contracts:

- Formal contract review meetings (face to face meetings at agreed stages throughout the year)
- Informal contract review communication (regular calls for example monthly as deemed required)
- Joint quality observations of teaching and learning and sharing of report
- Identification and sharing of good practices
- Involvement of employers and its key personnel in necessary action plans and establishing timescale.

The tutors have the ability to act independently make decisions to support the employer. However, where a requirement will change a fundamental process or agreement, the Academy Centre Manager may need to be consulted to ensure the action is implemented across provision.

Where the employer has concerns that are not fully addressed by their Academy Centre Manager, they will be able to escalate their concern or issue to the Academy Director. Additionally, the internal complaints procedure is available to an employer and they can escalate a concern following this process.

Continual engagement

Additional to the contract management activities there are events throughout the contracting period and beyond that we undertake to support our employers.

These include but are not limited to:

- Employer forum and surveys;
- Employer network events;
- Support with national apprenticeship week and Learn at work week;
- Reviews of learning (line managers to be involved which enables the delivery team to arrange and agree targets and off the job training on a regular basis);
- Regular meeting and involvement with the key personnel (nominee, mentors, coaches and nominee)

Direct helpdesk for general questions and queries (this is for employers to contact our central team to action any day to day queries such as system support for e-portfolio).

Employer Commitment

Employers that are found to be in breach of their contract agreement by not adhering to the principles of an apprenticeship such as not allowing staff adequate off the job time will be issued with contract concern notice. It is in the best interest of all parties to resolve any breaches by identifying short term actions that will tackle the underperformance. An updated agreement will be outlined and managed to ensure the programme is brought back on track.

Contract updates

Throughout a contracting year there can be contracting updates, this can be due to changes in ESFA guidance, Ofsted guidance, fee updates, change in employers' needs, change in apprentices' needs and others. Therefore, an updated agreement will be issued to employers to agree to any changes to the contract of service and commitment statements. This updated agreement will be kept as part of the employer's file.

We are committed to re-iterate our policies and procedures, contractual requirements and necessary protocols through regular face to face meeting and training sessions and through regular communication via phone, emails, newsletters with all our employers (nominee and key people), our website and brochure/prospectus.

The Academy Co-ordinator will update the ILR accordingly.

Continual improvement

Through our performance management approach, we continually review and manage a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The Academy Centre Manager and Academy Director are responsible for analysing performance against the goals and contracting terms. The Academy Centre Manager holds regular meetings to review performance which includes employer satisfaction and feedback.

Performance is reviewed by collating and analyzing information from:

- Employer forum feedback;
- Employer and key personnel survey feedback at different stages;
- Learner feedback on curriculum
- Complaints analysis;
- Queries and feedback from contract meetings;
- Employers quarterly meeting;
- Employer performance through data scrutiny e.g. achievement rates by employer, progress of learning and management of 20% off the job by employer.

The QIP will form the central record of all continual improvement activities that are established from employer related meetings, data and feedback. This is reviewed and updated monthly and is overseen with the Academy Centre Manager, the Business Development Manager and the Academy Director.